

97-84128-28

U.S. Work Projects  
Administration

Handbook for  
administrative employees

[Washington]

[1940]

97-84128-28

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Box 539 U.S. Work projects administration.

Handbook for administrative employees.

Federal works agency, Work projects adminis-  
tration. , Washington, U.S. Govt. print. off.,  
1940,cover-title, v, 16 p. fold. diagr. 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ cm.

409582

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATAFILM SIZE: 35mmREDUCTION RATIO: 10:1IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIBDATE FILMED: 7/2/97INITIALS: FB

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# HANDBOOK

*for*

## ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES



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FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY  
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

1/25/42 V.C.  
1/30/44 C.P.M.

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to define, in so far as it is possible, the policy and procedures that are followed concerning those questions and problems which arise from day to day in connection with the working conditions of all administrative employees on the Washington staff of the Work Projects Administration. It is intended to be of assistance as a guide to clarify the work relationships of the staff.

Much of our policy is prescribed by laws which are subject to change and to interpretation by independent authorities. Within the scope of our own jurisdiction, however, we can initiate and develop a basic method of procedures which will assure for the WPA the most efficient and competent service possible and a just consideration of the right of employees.

Such a policy must of necessity be modified from time to time, because of forces outside our control and because of changing conditions within the WPA.

F. C. HARRINGTON,  
*Commissioner.*

MAY 1, 1940.

(III)

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## FOREWORD

The Work Projects Administration is a Federal agency which cooperates with state and local governments in carrying out needed public improvements and services, in order to provide work and wages for the needy able-bodied unemployed. The WPA is a part of the whole machinery of government. No other function of government has a more worthwhile or socially significant purpose than our Administration. We are employed to carry out that purpose.

(v)

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## GENERAL RECRUITMENT

In the recruitment of new employees or the promotion of workers from one job to another, the primary factors are those which will promote the building up of a staff adequately qualified to perform satisfactorily the varied and specialized technical or professional functions required by the service. Consideration of religious, political or trade union affiliations shall neither hinder nor advance employment opportunities in the Administration.

*How Vacancies are Filled.*—When our work requires the employment of one or more persons to replace those who leave or for any other reason, the operating procedure is as follows: The job itself (including employee qualifications) is described in writing and classified.<sup>1</sup>

After the job is thus set up, recruitment begins. All candidates must possess the prescribed qualifications and are considered in accordance with our general recruitment policy from among several groupings in the following order:

1. Present employees still in a pay roll status who have been notified or are about to be notified of their termination without prejudice, and other present employees who are in grades lower than the one being filled.

2. Former employees of the central office who have been terminated without prejudice.

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<sup>1</sup> See "Classification" page 2.

3. Persons possessing a Replacement Service status, and active or former field employees. Eligibles from the Replacement Service shall generally receive priority over field personnel except for those positions for which field experience is a desirable prerequisite. In so far as it is possible, certified<sup>2</sup> persons shall be given first consideration.

4. Persons not eligible for Replacement but with experience in the Federal Government. This includes all project workers. Within this group certified persons shall be given priority.

5. Persons with no previous Government experience. So far as possible preference will be given to applicants possessing veteran status.

### JOB CLASSIFICATION

The administrative jobs in the WPA are now classified as required by the amended Classification Act of 1923. This Act and the Civil Service Law are two separate statutes. Classification, therefore, does not mean in itself that our jobs will acquire Civil Service status. The Civil Service Commission, however, administers the Classification Act and must approve the titles and grades now being established in the Administration.

*Method of Classification.*—All jobs are described in writing indicating in detail the character of the work, nature of supervision, responsibility in the producing unit, etc. The description is sometimes written by the employee occupying the job or (in case of a new job or

<sup>2</sup> A person whose need and eligibility for employment on projects of this Administration has been determined either by an approved public relief agency or by the Work Projects Administration.

a vacancy in which the job duties change) by the Administration. The Classification Unit then, starting with the written job description, commences to classify the job. In the process a thorough analysis of the functions is undertaken. Classification investigators may appear in the affected unit to discuss the job and they may compare it with others in the WPA or elsewhere. Investigation findings are reviewed by the Classification Officials who also consult the Civil Service Commission,<sup>3</sup> after which a classification of the job is made. Classification automatically designates for each job, the service, grade, class, position title, and salary range including the minimum, maximum, and appropriate wage steps therein. The classification process operates impersonally. A job, not a person, is classified. Eventually, every job will have attached to it the written minimum qualifications that are required by the Administration of those who ever hold the job.

*Appeal from Classification.*—An employee, or the administrative division concerned, may appeal from the classification allocated by the Classification Unit. The procedure in appeals is: A written appeal must be prepared by the employee or division involved on a form obtainable at the Personnel Office. After the appeal form is properly prepared, it is returned to the Personnel Office. The following steps are then taken: The Classification Unit is informed of the appeal. The job is examined or checked to discover whether it has changed since classification. If no job change has occurred, the

<sup>3</sup> The Civil Service Commission has designated its own representatives officially to advise and assist us with the initial classifications.



appeal is referred to the Appeals Board. The Board schedules a hearing and so notifies all parties concerned.

The appealing employee may or may not request witnesses to appear at the hearing. Such witnesses may be union representatives and/or anyone else concerned with the job. All such witnesses are invited by the Board to participate in its hearing on the case. The Board also may summon witnesses.

*The Appeals Board.*—The Board is made up of members representing the Classification Unit, and advisers from the Civil Service Commission. The chairman is from the Employees' Relations Unit of the Personnel Office. The proceedings are recorded and a verbatim transcription is made.

The Board transmits the record and recommendations of all appeals to the Commissioner of the WPA for final action. The employee and division concerned are notified by the Appeals Board in writing of the Commissioner's decision and the case is closed.<sup>4</sup>

### EMPLOYEE TRAINING

The Administration assumes responsibility for a limited amount of employee training. Such training is to enable employees better to adapt themselves to their assignments, to increase their efficiency in immediate tasks and to acquire new skills for related work. The purpose of this policy is to continue work standards

<sup>4</sup> This appeal machinery is not to be confused with the Appeals Board of the Civil Service Commission. The procedure described here indicates a method of appeal from one WPA authority to another and has no official relation to the Civil Service Commission.

of the WPA at a high level and to increase opportunities for employee's promotion in the WPA and for transfer to employment elsewhere.

*Training on the Job.*—Practically all jobs offer in themselves training possibilities for higher grade functions. As an employee masters the technique of a job and adapts himself to the work at hand, he undergoes an experience which may train him for additional and more difficult accomplishments. The Administration necessarily provides instruction, supervision, and methodology. The process cannot be a one-sided affair. It rests for the most part on the attitude of the employee, his potential capacity and the opportunity he has to learn while on the job.

### SERVICE RATINGS

Service ratings of employees are made periodically. The method is that of the Civil Service Commission and employs the same form used by all Federal Agencies operating under the Classification Act in the District of Columbia.

*Purpose.*—The purpose of service ratings is to provide an impersonal and unprejudiced record of the work progress a worker makes on his job. It is to serve both the employee and the Administration as a guide to training, and as a means to improve work performance and output. There is no mystery about the rating process.

*How Ratings are Made.*—Employees are rated by a designated supervisory rating officer attached to the production unit familiar with the employees' work. Each rating is considered

under three major subdivisions: Quality of Performance, Productiveness, and Qualifications Shown on Job. The final rating score is determined by a consideration of the job as a whole. The initial rating is reviewed by another rating official attached to the production unit. The last step in the process is a review and final rating by the division chief. The employee is then notified of his rating score by the first rating officer. Upon request, the rating officer will discuss with any employee concerned the final rating score and make available for his examination his rating form in its entirety.

*Appeals from Final Rating.*—An employee dissatisfied with his rating may appeal for a different rating to the administrative officer in his division. If a satisfactory settlement of the issues cannot be made through the division administrative officer, the employee may appeal further to the Central Personnel Office, provided:

- (a) The appeal must be in writing.
- (b) The employee and his administrative officer must have attempted to settle the case.
- (c) The appeal to the Central Personnel Office must be made not later than thirty (30) days after the employee has received his service rating.

### PROMOTIONS

The Administration will maintain a policy of promoting employees from the ranks to jobs of higher caliber. The volume of promotions is of necessity restricted by the limited size of the WPA and by the employment opportunities in the general labor market which affects normal

turnover; it is further conditioned by the education and work experience of all employees.

*Promotion Procedure.*—As has been indicated in the section of this handbook dealing with Recruitment, current employees are considered for job vacancies or new openings in the Administration before formerly employed or outside candidates are recruited.

In this process the central Personnel Office examines the personal file<sup>5</sup> of the currently employed possible candidates for promotion. (All employees have been requested to file with their personal history record a work preference on the I. B. M. Personnel Information Sheet (form 64) which is obtainable at the Personnel Office.) The affected employee is then interviewed by the staff of the central Personnel Office. The final selection is made by the employing unit from a number of candidates nominated by the Personnel Office. This procedure is applied on an agency-wide basis; employees may be promoted in their own or to another division.

*Notice of Job Openings.*—All openings of jobs on the administrative payroll of Washington, except those of a policy making character, will be posted on official departmental bulletin boards. The notice will contain a description of the job and the minimum qualifications required of eligible candidates.

Simultaneously with the job opening the promotional policy described above automatically

<sup>5</sup> Employees should keep the Personnel Office posted concerning new skills or additional education, etc. Forms designed for that purpose are obtainable from supervisors.

begins to operate. However, any employee having the required qualifications may apply for the job *in writing* to the Personnel Office.

### TRANSFERS

The Administration will cooperate with employees whenever possible to facilitate their voluntary transfer from one WPA division to another and to other Government agencies or to private employers; provided that such transfer does not adversely affect the WPA.

*Other Transfers.*—An attempt will be made by the Administration to initiate the transfer of all superfluous employees to other jobs before termination takes place and during the process of separation.

### TERMINATIONS

When reduction of staff becomes necessary because of curtailment of work or for budgetary reasons the following procedure is followed in the termination of employees: The rule of seniority is the major factor whenever it can be applied without obvious injury to the Administration. Service ratings will also be considered. Exceptions to this policy are cited below. Seniority is measured by original date of employment on the administrative staff of the WPA or its preceding organizations in Washington minus any time when separated from the payroll and time on leave without pay for period of 30 or more consecutive days compared with all other persons in the same class within designated units. (Examples of class are: Assistant Clerk Stenographer, CAF 3 or Statistical Clerk, CAF 4, etc.)

Exceptions to the seniority rule are:

Any termination required by present or future laws such as the Hatch Law,<sup>6</sup> state quotas, etc.

Termination of employees with veteran preference status.

Termination of employees with an established inefficiency record.

Termination of employees for any dismissive cause.

### PERSONNEL REPLACEMENT SERVICE

A Personnel Replacement Service is maintained by the Work Projects Administration. It operates to facilitate reemployment of employees who are separated, without prejudice, or who resigned in good standing from agencies of the executive and legislative branch of the Federal Government in Washington, D. C.<sup>7</sup>

All agencies in the executive branch of the Government using non-civil service or emergency employees have been directed by the President of the United States to use the Personnel Replacement Service in the recruitment of new personnel in Washington, D. C.<sup>8</sup> During the year 1939 there were 2005 persons placed in jobs by the Personnel Replacement Service in the District of Columbia.

*How the Replacement Service Operates.*—When employees of the WPA are separated without prejudice their names and occupational characteristics are automatically recorded on the replacement list of the Replacement Service.

<sup>6</sup> An act to prevent pernicious political activity.

<sup>7</sup> Employees must have been employed a minimum of thirty (30) consecutive days at any time subsequent to September 1, 1935, and must now reside in the vicinity of Washington.

<sup>8</sup> Budget Bureau Circular No. 349, July 9, 1939.

As calls come in from all agencies using the Service, candidates for jobs are selected according to their occupations from the list and referred to the employing agency for job placement. WPA employees are not given preference (except for openings in our own Administration) by the Employment Service, but they are included with others on the register for reemployment consideration.

The Personnel Replacement Service is guided by the incoming requests for employees from the interested agencies concerning the qualifications of applicants, number sent for job interview, type of worker, etc. Ordinarily, three or more candidates are sent by the Replacement Service to all job openings. The selection of candidates is made by the employing agency.

*What Employees Can Do About Replacement.*—All WPA employees eligible for replacement should check their status periodically (once a week) with the Personnel Replacement Service. Factors of importance are: Proper address, telephone number, and notice of any change in same. When job openings come to the Replacement Service, its office tries immediately to contact eligible candidates by telephone and secondly by mail. Wrong phone numbers or changed addresses at this point often mean loss of job interviews.

Adequate occupational information should be recorded with the Replacement Service. An employee's work record here may not show all of his occupational equipment. Employees themselves must see that they are properly registered.

*Active and Inactive Registers.*—As persons registered with the Personnel Replacement Service are placed in jobs, their names are removed from the files. They are transferred to the inactive file if they cannot be located by telephone or mail. Periodic surveys are made by the Service to keep its register active and up to date, but all persons interested should themselves see to it that they are properly registered so long as they want replacement service.

## ADJUSTMENT OF COMPLAINTS

*Unions.*—The right of employees to organize or join unions of their own choice is taken for granted. The Administration will recognize such employee organizations for the purpose of adjusting complaints or for the discussion of personnel policy in behalf of their members. This means an employee choosing to do so may be represented by the accredited union in the adjustment of work problems with the Administration.

*Individual Action.*—The Administration recognizes the right of employees to adjust complaints on an individual basis. This means an employee may represent himself in the adjustment of his work problems with the Administration.

*Negotiating Machinery.*—The method now in use to deal with employees' work problems and which is described in the following section of this handbook under "Employees' Relations" operates impartially in so far as union and non-union action is concerned. In utilizing the machinery of the Employees' Relations Unit,

employees, without any direction from the Administration, may or may not be represented by the union. The employees themselves make the choice.

### EMPLOYEES' RELATIONS

The Administration has established authoritative machinery in the Personnel Office to handle work problems and grievances of employees. The purpose of this procedure is to clarify and to adjust problems which arise around employees in the performance of their work. The Personnel Section maintains an Employees' Relations Unit to carry out this purpose.

*Work Problems and Grievances.*—A work problem affecting employees may arise from a misunderstanding concerning the policy or function of the WPA, physical conditions at the point of operations, or through the work relationship attending supervision, and among general staff employees themselves. A grievance can grow out of a minor work problem or it can originate from other reasons.

*Procedure.*—When an employee has a question in his mind that is related to his work or to the WPA as a whole the employee may consult the Employees' Relations Officer for an answer to that question. If an employee has a problem, a complaint, or a grievance that is related to his work or to the Administration, he may also take that matter up with the Employees' Relations Officer.

The employee may attempt to settle his problems with his supervisors or his division administrative officials before the Employees'

Relations Unit is consulted or he may initiate discussion and negotiations directly with the latter.

*What the Officer Does.*—The Employees' Relations Officer may not be able to answer all questions or solve all problems, complaints and grievances satisfactorily to the employees but he can initiate the operation of the Administration's machinery which disposes of such matters.

*How Grievances Are Handled.*—Some grievances are settled by the Employees' Relations Unit through discussion and negotiations between the parties concerned in an informal manner. Others require formal hearings at which the employee and administrative officials involved discuss the issue, present data, witnesses etc., to clarify the facts. A verbatim record of such hearings is made and becomes a basis for settlement of the case.

*Settlement.*—Ordinarily, complaints are adjusted by the Employees' Relations Unit but those which it cannot settle to the satisfaction of the employee may be appealed by the employee to the Assistant Commissioner's Office, and from there it may be taken to the Office of the Commissioner.

### WELFARE SERVICE

The Administration maintains a Welfare Service to protect the health of employees.

*Accidents.*—Persons injured on the job are given first aid treatment and if necessary are hospitalized by the Public Health Service through our Welfare Service.

*Sickness.*—The Welfare Service also gives medical first aid to employees who are ill; it

gives health consultation to such employees and when necessary puts the employee in touch with his own physician or upon request recommends physicians.

When employees are absent from work because of sickness, their employing unit reports such absence to the Welfare Service. After two days of sick leave<sup>\*</sup> the affected employee is visited by a registered nurse attached to the Welfare Service. The Welfare Service maintains emergency rooms in the Walker Johnson Building, Temporary Building, and in the Auditorium. These rooms are staffed by registered nurses with equipment to meet emergency situations.

*Compensation for Injuries.*—In case of injury sustained while in the performance of duty an employee may be entitled to assistance under the United States Employees' Compensation Act. Employees so affected may have the service of a compensation officer in our Administration. There is a posted notice concerning this subject in all our office buildings. Employees should familiarize themselves with its contents and act accordingly.

#### GENERAL WELFARE—HEALTH, INSURANCE

Employees of the WPA are eligible to participate in various beneficial welfare organizations which function in Washington. The organizations operate on a monthly payment plan. Fees may be paid by members to designated collectors attached to our offices. The organizations of this nature that solicit membership in the WPA are:

<sup>\*</sup> Or on the first day if requested by the employee.

*Group Hospitalization Incorporated.*—The service of this organization is to provide hospital care for individuals and families.

*Group Health Association, Inc.*—This organization's program is for "the prevention and cure of illness and improvement of health of Federal workers in Washington." It has a service for individuals and families.

*Mutual Health Service of the District of Columbia.*—This organization provides medical service to groups of individuals and families whose salaries fall within certain specified limits.

*Group Life Insurance.*—The WPA Employees Beneficial Association was organized by the employees. Its purpose is to provide "life insurance at a minimum cost." All employees of the WPA (and other eligible Government employees) between the ages of 15 and 60 years may apply for this insurance. The policies carry from \$1,000 to \$5,000 insurance.

The insurance you obtain through this Association does not terminate if you leave the WPA. It may be continued in force by paying the regular association rate.

*WPA Credit Union.*—A Credit Union, operating under Federal charter, has been organized by administrative employees of the WPA in Washington for their benefit. Its function is to promote thrift by installment saving, making loans to members at reasonable rates of interest, and helping members use their savings and credit most effectively.

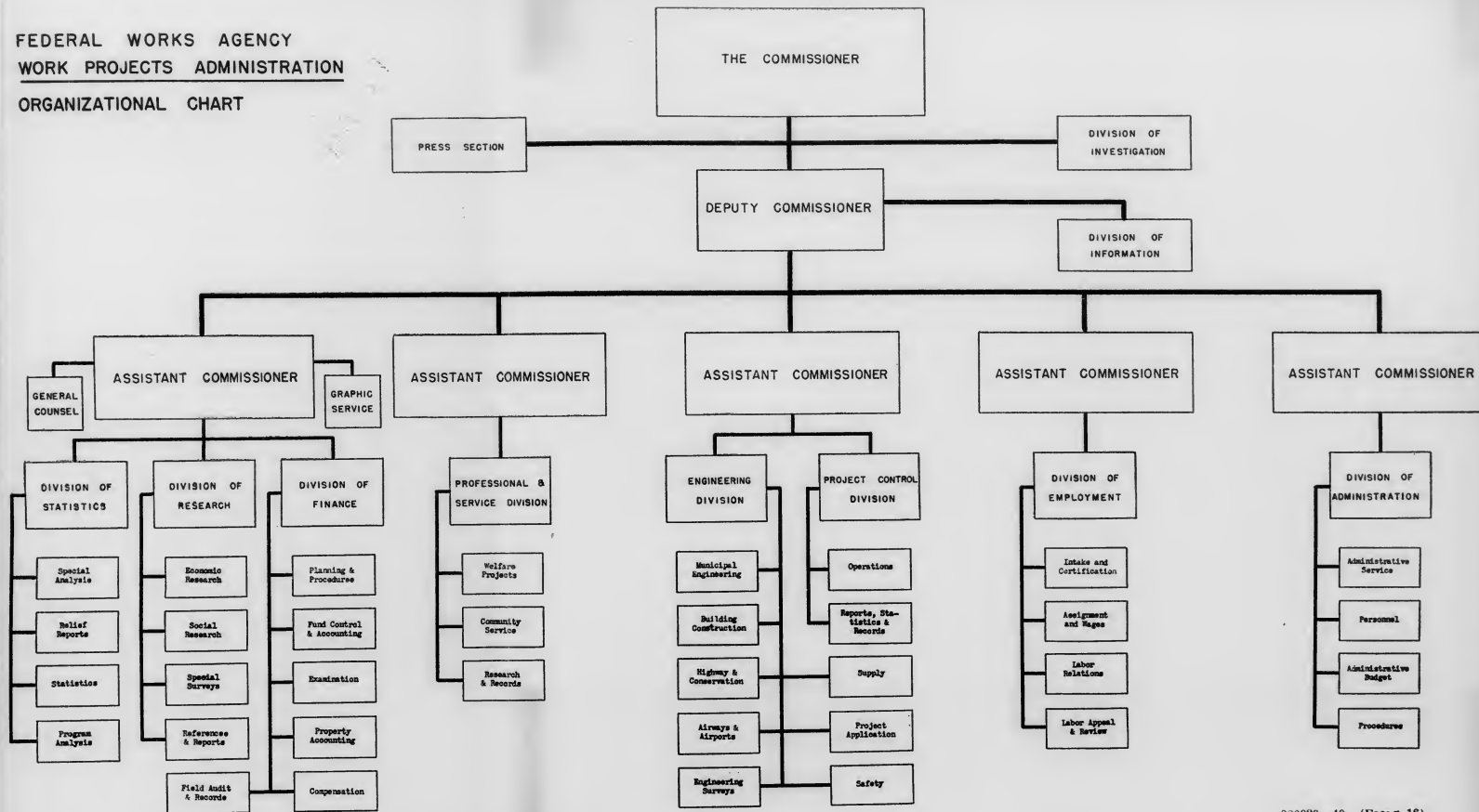
The Credit Union, Life Insurance, Health and Hospital Organizations are represented by designated members of our staff and each group issues literature which explains in detail their

services. For further information consult the Personnel Office.

*Miscellaneous Information.*—This handbook does not pretend to contain all the information employees need to know. For instance, it is assumed that employees are familiar with their sick leave and annual leave privileges and such items as starting and quitting time of the regular work shift. Questions concerning tardiness and leave without pay, etc. can easily be cleared with unit supervisors and administration officers of the divisions.

We have omitted also reference to employee recreational activities. The administration does not sponsor or participate in the management of these activities although the employees do so and frequently advertise them throughout the WPA. Notices on various bulletin boards carry information concerning the above and the Employees' Relations Officer will attempt further to answer your questions about any matters which are not now clear to you.

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY  
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 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





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